

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LONDON 14033 111526Z

44

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 14033

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, UK (NI)

SUBJECT: WILSON/THATCHER TALKS ON NORTHERN IRELAND

REF: LONDON 13325

1. PRIME MINISTER WILSON CALLED IN MRS. THATCHER SEPTEMBER 10 TO INFORM HER ABOUT NORTHERN IRELAND EVENTS. MEETING AT 10 DOWNING STREET (ACCORDING TO ONE SOURCE AND AT HOUSE OF COMMONS ACCORDING TO ANOTHER) ALSO INCLUDED NORTHERN IRELAND SECRETARY REES, AIREY NEAVE, WHO IS CONSERVATIVE SHADOW SPOKESMAN ON IRELAND, AND POSSIBLY CONSERVATIVE SPOKESMAN ON DEFENSE, GEORGE YOUNGER (PRESS REPORTS DIFFER).

2. WILSON CALLED IN THATCHER FOR CONSULTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS IN FACE OF INCREASED TENSION IN NORTHERN IRELAND AND GROWING SPECULATION ABOUT THE SURVIVABILITY OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION (SEE SEPARATE TELEGRAMS WHICH HAVE REPORTED THIS DEVELOPMENT). MEETING WAS ALSO DESIGNED TO MAINTAIN BIPARTISAN APPROACH TO ULSTER PROBLEMS IN VIEW OF GROWING CRITICISM OF GOVERNMENT'S DETENTION POLICY, INCREASE OF TERRORIST INCIDENTS AND MOUNTING CONCERN BEING VOICED, PARTICULARLY BY CONSERVATIVE BACKBENCHERS ABOUT POSSIBILITY OF A GOVERNMENT

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 LONDON 14033 111526Z

TIVE BACKBENCHERS ABOUT POSSIBILITY OF A GOVERNMENT

DEAL WITH PROVISIONAL IRA.

3. RE LATTER POINT, YOUNGER ISSUED STATEMENT ON PUBLICIZED CASE OF SEAMUS TOOMEY DEPLORING REES' LACK OF FRANKNESS WHEN QUESTIONED ABOUT TOOMEY SOMETIME AGO. YOUNGER SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT'S POSITION WAS "MOST UNSATISFACTORY" WITH REGARD TO TOOMEY'S ALLEGED MEMBERSHIP IN A PROSCRIBED ORGANIZATION. TOOMEY CASE WAS RELATED TO STATEMENT PAISLEY GAVE RECENTLY INDICATING THAT TOOMEY WAS NO LONGER ON THE WANTED LIST AND NO LONGER WAS BOUND BY SECURITY RESTRICTIONS. IN HIS STATEMENT PAISLEY REFERRED TO DOCUMENT ISSUED BY ARMY IN NORTHERN IRELAND ON STATUS OF TOOMEY.

4. BOTH WILSON AND MRS. THATCHER WERE HESITANT ABOUT MEETING THE PRESS FOLLOWING THE HOUR-LONG CONFERENCE. HOWEVER, PRESS REPORTS ALLEGE THAT "IT WAS STATED BIPARTISAN APPROACH TO NORTHERN IRELAND AFFAIRS WOULD CONTINUE". MEETING IN LONDON FOLLOWED DAY-LONG SESSION AT CHECQUERS INCLUDING WILSON, 17 CABINET MEMBERS AND 4 OTHER MINISTERS WHO, IN ADDITION TO IRELAND WERE DISCUSSING GOVERNMENT PLANS FOR DEVOLUTION IN SCOTLAND AND WALES.

5. CONSERVATIVES HAVE NOW ANNOUNCED NEAVE WILL GO TO NORTHERN IRELAND ON FACT-FINDING MISSION FOR TWO WEEKS ACCOMPANIED BY CONSERVATIVE MP JOHN BIGGS-DAVISON. LATTER IS CHAIRMAN OF CONSERVATIVE BACKBENCH COMMITTEE ON NORTHERN IRELAND QUESTIONS.

RICHARDSON

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